



garyvarvel.com

...nth, but
...at's up?

...ded as trash journalism.
...the Times' attitude toward
...Clinton's various sex scan-
...was hardly one of unbridled
...usiasm.

...ring those years, the Gray
...published many, many ar-
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Midlands Voices

UNO is interacting more with Omahans

BY ROBERT S. RUNYON

The writer, of Omaha, is dean emeritus of libraries at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Since 2000, the University of Nebraska at Omaha has evolved from an institution groping for its urban identity and community niche to one increasingly committed to a strategic plan focused upon (1) putting students first, (2) achieving academic excellence and (3) engaging in community service.

This 11-year-old campus credo continues to gain force and momentum as increasing numbers of faculty, staff members and students collaboratively work to integrate UNO's educational goals and practices into the fabric of the Omaha community.

Beginning as a small Presbyterian seminary in 1908, transformed as a secular municipal university in 1931, UNO became a state institution in 1968.

Starting in October, multiple events will celebrate UNO's 100-year growth and future in the Omaha community. (Visit

layers of university governance. Recent implementation phases involve ways to measure plan results and the incorporation of strategic priorities into departmental goals and individual performance reviews.

Undergirding these developments has been expanded use of technology for improved communication and greater individual participation. Though computers and networking once were considered the province of the few, they now provide multiple platforms for more intensive student, faculty and staff interaction.

A recent UNO public forum with community members, in

which I participated, revealed the extent of these changes to me as a retired faculty member.

Another open forum a few weeks ago was likewise

enlightening. Faculty members from diverse disciplines discussed environmental sustainability issues in the student

Seldom has there been such a student-focused, bottom-up percolation of ideas and initiatives.

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...course, these very liberal
...rs were offering merely a
...nal endorsement of the
...objectionable Republican
...eir lights. But still, McCain
...their choice, even though
...knew of these allegations
...given what we know about
...went on behind the scenes,
...ved they were true.

...esumably, the argument
...something like this:
...e's no direct proof that the
...l relationship ever exist-
...nd even if it did, marital in-
...ty isn't our business. Be-
...if true, the underlying im-
...propriety — writing a
...ne letter to the FCC — is
...y a serious transgression.
...ain could have done this for
...y of reasons, including be-
...he thought it was the right
...hing to do. In short, his
...ll qualifications dwarf the
...ations.

...suming I'm right, it's tell-
...that this was a strong
...h argument for picking
...in as "the best choice for
...arty's presidential nomi-
...n" but nowhere near
...g enough to prevent the
...s from using the same in-
...tion to destroy that same
...plicant once he'd all but
...up the nomination.

...an interesting double
...rd, no?

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100-year growth and future in
the Omaha community. (Visit
the Web at www.uno100.org.)

UNO's signature Service
Learning program began with
just seven courses in 1997. By
the 2006-07 academic year, the
program had grown to more
than 1,600 students in 110
classes in interdisciplinary
programs across the univer-
sity.

Ongoing relationships have
been established with more
than 200 community partners.
The Carnegie Foundation for
the Advancement of Teaching
has recognized UNO among
only 76 U.S. colleges and uni-
versities in its new Community
Engagement Classification.
(Visit [www.unomaha.edu/
servicelearning/index.php](http://www.unomaha.edu/servicelearning/index.php).)

The proverbial gap between
the classroom and the world of
work is steadily being broken
down as faculty cross over dis-
ciplinary boundaries and reach
out collaboratively to compa-
nies, agencies and institutions
in the Omaha community. New
programs of Service Learning
engagement span most UNO
colleges, with innovative link-
ages taking place among tradi-
tional academic disciplines and
the issues, problems and oppor-
tunities latent within the local
community.

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bers from diverse disciplines
discussed environmental sus-
tainability issues in the student
union. Among the presenters
was Bruce E. Johansen, the
Frederick W. Kayser Professor
in Communication at UNO and
possibly the most published au-
thor in UNO's 100-year history,
with more than 30 books to his
credit.

One recent publication of his,
the three-volume "Global
Warming in the 21st Century,"
has been cited as one of the
"best books of 2007" by a presti-
gious academic book review.

Johansen responded in the
campus forum to a local critic
who had decried the lack of
numbers in his recent essay on
global warming in *The
World-Herald* (Jan. 15 *Mid-
lands Voices*).

Johansen's publications cite
and summarize the works of
many of the world's leading cli-
mate scientists, who present
abundant numerical evidence
for the human-induced global
warming that threatens life on
Earth as we know it.

"In one hundred years," Jo-
hansen's preface says, "stu-
dents of history may remark at
the nature of the fears that
stalled responses to climate
change early in the 21st cen-
tury."

Thus important matters of
community and world concern
are being actively explored and
debated alongside students at
UNO.